



News Release

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Watkins To Hold Statewide Proposal A Forums

Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins will hold several statewide public forums in April and May to receive feedback on the State Board of Education's recently developed report on school financing in Michigan.

From Proposal A to A+ - A discussion of issues and options regarding the financial requirements of public education in Michigan was accepted by the State Board of Education at its March meeting.

The bi-partisan report, funded by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) and written by a cadre of school finance experts, including representatives from Indiana University, Wayne State University, Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and the non-partisan Citizens Research Council, is designed to generate conversation about the ways school funding works in Michigan.

The impetus of the report occurred when the State Board unanimously commissioned its creation in November 2001.

"The benefit of Proposal A is recognized. However, much like a 1994 automobile, Proposal A may be in need of an engine overhaul and body redesign to remain contemporary," Watkins said. "Perhaps Proposal A was good in the 20th century. Now, perhaps, the citizens and children of Michigan deserve Proposal A+ as we move into the 21st century."

Watkins said policy makers have a responsibility to take a "conscious look at our decisions to see if they withstand the test of time and to ask ourselves if we can do better."

"It is with that intent that I share this report," he said. "Our goal should be to work together to find a shared vision and common agenda that will address the shortcomings of the existing system."

All forums are scheduled for 7 p.m. The forums will be held in the following locations:

Thursday, April 18

Houghton High School
Auditorium
1603 Gundlach Road
Houghton

Wednesday, April 24

Dickinson Center
Large Group Meeting Room
Livonia Public Schools
18000 Newburg Road
Livonia

Tuesday, April 30

Continuing Education Center
Kalamazoo Area Math and Science
Center Auditorium
714 S. Westnedge Ave
Kalamazoo

MORE

Monday, May 6
Hamtramck High School Community Ctr.
11410 Charest
Hamtramck

Wednesday, May 8
Hill Center - 2nd Floor Conference Room
Lansing Public Schools
5815 Wise Rd.
Lansing

Tuesday, May 14
Northwestern Michigan College
Dennos Museum-Milliken Auditorium
Munson Ave.
Traverse City

Tuesday, May 21
Bay City Central High School-Auditorium
1624 Columbus Ave.
Bay City

Additionally, another forum will be held at the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce's annual gathering on Mackinac Island on May 30-31.

The State Board will review final recommendations from the task force and forward policy recommendations to the Legislature in July for its consideration.

A copy of the full report is available at www.state.mi.us/mde. For further information about the Proposal A to A+ forums, contact the Michigan Department of Education at 517-241-1160.

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